

MTA-1017
3 August 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS
THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Tel Aviv Bureau -- July 1981

I. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

The bureau's Hebrew section, busy throughout July because of a variety of political and military developments, began the month by working a mid-shift along with teletypists and an editor to cover the Knesset election results. The election, which occurred on 30 June and was the first in 4 years, became a see-saw battle between the two frontrunners, the Likud list headed by Menahem Begin, and the Alignment headed by Shimon Peres. As the voting projections and the results were broadcast, the bureau expeditiously filed numerous FYIs and reports giving details of what was transpiring, including early morning news conferences by Begin and Peres in which each claimed victory. It was not until 9 July that the final election results were announced. Neither the Likud, with 48 seats, nor the Alignment, with 47, had a majority.

The laborious process of forming a new government began a few days later when President Navon gave Begin a mandate to attempt to form a coalition government. As of the end of the month that process had still not been completed, but it appeared likely that Begin would form a government in August. The bureau filed dozens of items detailing the coalition negotiating process and the attendant controversy.

Ambassador Samuel Lewis thanked the bureau for the rapid processing of the lengthy Begin and Peres press conferences which were the subject of an early morning meeting by embassy officials. The ambassador also requested foreign reaction to the Israeli election, which we were able to supply by requesting drop copies from other bureaus.

From the 10th of the month onward the Hebrew section was also occupied with processing reports on the clashes in northern Israel and southern Lebanon between Israeli forces and the Christian militia on the one side and various Palestinian groups and their allies on the other. The fighting included a series of air, ground and sea raids by Israeli forces, including attacks on PLO bases in Beirut, and exchanges of artillery and missile fire. The section maintained an open-speaker watch on both Jerusalem Domestic and IDF radios to ensure that no significant items were missed.

A U.S.-inspired cease-fire, which went into effect on 24 July, appeared to be holding at the end of the month despite artillery shelling into northern Israel and the Christian enclave, a 29 July terrorist attack on a bus near Jerusalem, and the 30 July downing by the Israelis of a Syrian MIG-25 during a dogfight over Lebanon.

The Turkish section covered three Moscow in Turkish casts daily from 29 June through 4 July for London Bureau while the BBC's Turkish monitor was on leave.

On 26 July the Turkish section began covering five English broadcasts on a daily basis. Three of the broadcasts are from the BBC World Service and two are from the Voice of Hope transmitting from the Christian enclave in southern Lebanon. The Turkish section was assigned to cover the casts following the departure of the bureau's contract Persian monitor, who along with the remaining Persian/Dari monitor had been covering the English casts.

Because of the loss of the contract monitor, the bureau reduced coverage of Moscow in Dari from 5 days weekly to 4, with Gulf Bureau picking up an extra day's coverage.

B. Lateral Services

On 13 July the Hebrew section completed the photocopying of several hundred Arab and West Bank reference cards. The copies were then sent to London Bureau in response to a request. The cards, compiled by the Hebrew section, contain such information as the correct spelling of personal names and the proper rendering of the names of organizations.

C. Technical

The bureau's cruising officer completed his survey of the remote antenna field during the month and a final evaluation and report was filed to Chief/FCS. The report proved to be virtually identical to results obtained in an earlier survey.

The technicians completed work on installing antenna switching devices in the cruising position and the Persian/Dari booth during the month. Monitors can now switch from one antenna to another without having to go to the main patch panel.

II. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

Tel Aviv's FSN's were granted a pay increase effective 1 July of approximately 13.6 percent.

Hebrew monitor [] was promoted to FSN 8/6 on 12 July. STAT

[] and family departed the bureau on 15 July, STAT
having been replaced by [] who arrived on 7 July. STAT

Persian contract monitor [] was terminated on 25 July. STAT

B. Buildings and Grounds

Because of a series of power outages due to electrical maintenance work being conducted in the embassy, bureau technicians installed two emergency lighting fixtures in the editorial/monitorial area. There are now three such fixtures in operation, including one in the telecommunications room.

The bureau chief's office, the main corridor, and the administrative assistant's office were painted during the month. The rest of the bureau will be painted in August.

IV. VISITS

[] chief/Engineering Division, visited the bureau STAT
on 1 and 2 July. The visit included trips to both remote
antenna sites.

V. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

[] once again served as coordinating chairman STAT
of the embassy's annual 4th of July picnic at the American School.

The new bureau chief has replaced outgoing bureau chief [] STAT
[] as vice-chairman of the Embassy Commissary Board. STAT

[] STAT

Chief, Tel Aviv Bureau

Attachments: A. Production Report
B. Filed Wordage Report
C. Communications Report